

THE  
TRINITY.  
A POEM.

By MATTHEW TOMLINSON, M. A.  
Chaplain to the Right Hon<sup>ble</sup> JOHN Earl of HYNDFORD.

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-----*Humiles juvat alte linquere terras,  
Et fortunatas superum percurrere sedes.*

HIERON. VID. Hymn. Deo.

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THE

TRINITY  
A FORM

By the Rev. John W. ...  
Chaplain to the ...  
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## To the READER.

*THE greatest part of the following Poem was wrote when the author was scholar of Trinity-College in Cambridge, and was presented to the Master and Fellows of that Society, as a College-Exercise, on Trinity-Sunday, 1726, and had the honor to be well receiv'd; and some Gentlemen, whose judgment he has always highly esteem'd, even then desired that it might be published.*

*But tho' he could not but be pleas'd with so great a compliment, he excused himself upon account of some inaccuracies, which he thought he could easily correct; and he likewise saw that several things might be added, which would give the whole a more poetical turn, and make it more acceptable, as well as instructive, to the generality of his readers.*

*He thinks it proper, once for all, to observe, how much he is indebted to our great Poet; and some of the best lines in this performance are only faint imitations of the incomparable MILTON.*

*It will easily be seen, that he has carefully avoided embarrassing himself in the Trinitarian controversy; and he heartily wishes, that the Gentlemen on both sides of the question would for the future content themselves with the plain words of Revelation, and not by Metaphysical Subtleties and Scholastic Niceties perplex both themselves and others; and above all let them take care, lest whilst contending about the Unity of the Divine Nature, they destroy that Unity of Spirit which is the distinguishing characteristic of a disciple of Christ.*

*As for the Author, he sincerely professes, if he thought he had advanced any thing that opposed any one Text of Scripture, or was contrary to the soundest Philosophy, the Religion of Nature, it should never have seen the light. In short he hopes, that however he succeeds as a Poet, he shall ever support the character of a good Man, an honest Divine, and sincere Christian.*







T H E  
T R I N I T Y.

**B**EYOND the vast circumf'rence of the skies,  
 Far sever'd from the ken of human eyes;  
 Beyond the heav'n of heav'ns, in awful state,  
 The bright effulgence of the Godhead fate,  
 5 Ten thousand thousand angels round him wait.  
 Blest hierarchs! to whom th' Almighty Mind  
 Good beyond thought, beyond conception kind,  
 Propitious, this vast privilege assign'd,  
 Within his courts, (o glorious task!) to gaze  
 10 On his bright Majesty's unbounded blaze;  
 In choral symphonies his praise proclaim,  
 And loudly celebrate th' Almighty's fame!

Towards

## The TRINITY.

Towards his throne submissively they bow,  
 Their golden crowns with solemn pomp they throw  
 15 Down at his feet ; on heaven's bright pavement spread  
 The rosy chaplets, that adorn'd their heads.  
 Th'immortal wreaths, blest prize of hardy deed !  
 Those glorious wreaths, which bounteous heav'n decreed  
 Shou'd grace their heads, who valiantly repell'd  
 20 The tempter's wiles, nor against heav'n rebell'd :  
 Too just, in a base cause, to draw their sword,  
 Too grateful to renounce and murmur at their Lord.

Again their crowns resume, again they bind  
 Their locks resplendent, with bright beams entwin'd.  
 25 Their purple garments o'er their shoulders throw,  
 Graceful again before his throne they bow.  
 With cheerful speed their golden harps they strung,  
 The spheres and all the constellations rung ;  
 The list'ning planets joy'd to hear the sound ;  
 30 Myriads of Io's from each star rebound.

Thee,

## THE TRINITY.

27

Thee, FATHER, first Omnipotent they sing,  
Immortal, Infinite, Eternal King;  
Sole author of all Being, source of Light,  
They sing thee clad in thy creating Might;  
35 In notes seraphic they thy praise proclaim;  
And in thy six days works extoll thy fame.  
Tell how Almighty vigor was display'd;  
And the vast fabrick of the world was laid.

Vain Atheist, round cast thine enquiring eyes;  
40 View the large distant spaces of the skies;  
See how yon lordly sun, big globe of light,  
Profusely gay, magnificently bright,  
Thro' heav'n's wide convex darts his quickning rays,  
And gladdens mortals with his sprightly blaze!

45 Nor wonder we, if by his beauty charm'd,  
Chear'd by his beams, by his sweet influence warm'd;  
That lucid fount, whence such rich blessings flow,  
To which the springs of health and life we owe,

E'er

## The TRINITY.

E'er Revelation clear'd the mental fight,  
 50 And brought the hidden things of heav'n to light,  
 Was by learn'd Ethnics as a God receiv'd,  
 And the Creator of the world believ'd.

See millions more, that with diminish'd light,  
 And twinkling beam, scarce strike the distant fight ;  
 55 Worlds far remote with sacred radiance fill,  
 Resistless proofs of an Almighty skill.

If studious still fresh wonders to descry,  
 Let artful tubes thy weaker sight supply,  
 And aided by fam'd BACON's piercing eye,

}  
 See

Ver. 51. ---as a God receiv'd.] The ingenious author of the *Alkibla*, or distinguisher upon worshipping towards the East, observes, that mankind is naturally prone to superstition and idolatry, so as to worship and serve the creature even more than the Creator ; and by several quotations from writers of unquestionable authority makes it appear, that the worship of the Sun was the great and most early idolatry of the Eastern countries ; and he observes, that holy *Job* mentions the very sight of it as a temptation, *Job* xxxi. ver. 26. 27. And *Moses*, as a compulsion to adore it, *Deut.* iv. ver. 16. And monsieur *Jurieu* scruples not to affirm, *De toutes les erreurs il n'y en a pas une qui soit plus supportable que celle de ceux qui ont pris le Soleil pour un Dieu ; car cet astre est si beau, si plein des traits de la Divinite, qu'on a bien pu facilement prendre la copie pour l'original.* Hist. Critiq. p. 406. edit. Amst. 1704. Vid. *Alkibl.* p. 8.

Ver. 53. See millions more, &c.] It is now the general receiv'd opinion of Philosophers, that the fixt stars are so many Suns, and are encompassed with their respective planets or worlds. Vid. *Derham's Astro-Theol.* B. ii. Ch. ii.



# THE TRINITY.

9

60 See how those orbs, those pond'rous planets roll,  
With swift career about the starry pole,  
To their respective residents convey  
The cheerful bounty of the solar ray.  
And whilst with duplicated course they steer,

65 Limit the day, and circumscribe the year;  
Metre out the hours, and give the seasons birth;  
With borrow'd beam gild the benighted earth.  
'Tis not by Chance; these motions speak aloud  
The wise, th'unerring conduct of a God.

70 If sceptic still, let thy sagacious brain,  
Exclusive of a God, the cause explain  
Why horrid claps of thunder rend the air,  
And the wing'd light'ning shoots a dismal glare.

B

Say

Ver. 165.-----*Bacon's piercing eye.* Roger Bacon was an English Franciscan Frier in the 13th century, and sometime Fellow of Merton-College in the university of Oxford, a man of such great knowledge in all the branches of natural Philosophy, that he justly deserv'd the title of *Doctor Mirabilis*. He made a great many discoveries, and I think Mr. Hearne, in his *Ductor Histor.* has sufficiently proved, that we are indebted to him for the invention of the Telescope, and the Gregorian Period. See *Duct. Hist.* Vol. ii. p. 385, 386.

## The TRINITY.

- Say why dire comets with impetuous force,  
 75 Thro' yielding skies direct their slanting course,  
 Dilate the fiery horrors of their train,  
 And fill the busy gazer's breast with pain?  
 Say why the clouds replete with proper seed,  
 Rough storms, fierce winds, & noxious vapours breed,  
 80 With pestilential steams the earth annoy,  
 And quickly would the sick'ning world destroy,  
 Did not kind heav'n, with providential care,  
 Relieve the globe, and purify the air,  
 And nature's ruins bounteously repair?  
 85 Say, from its lap why the mild æther pours  
 Its genial moisture and its quick'ning show'rs,  
 And decks the gaudy earth with all its beauteous stores.

- View next the spacious regions of the earth,  
 Then, monster like, belch all thy poison forth;  
 90 Say why this orb, of all the boundless space,  
 Chose the most proper, most convenient place,

For

## The TRINITY.

II

For the wise ends which nature's law requires,  
Which use demands, and ornament desires.

Thou, Epicurus, I conjure thee say,

95 Since unobstructed matter flies away,  
How here thy senseless atoms knew to stay.

Mark well its curious structure, then declare  
What traces of consummate art appear,

What nice perfection in each part we spy,

100 The hard, the soft, the humid, and the dry,  
The low extended-vale, and mountain high.

With what variety of charms array'd!

With what rare magazines of wealth inlaid!

A work so perfect, and so well design'd,

105 Must needs require a wise directing Mind.

Of ev'ry diff'rent soil the product view,

Nor's less observance to its natives due ;

Each herb, each weed, each insect, ev'ry clod,

Bespeaks its author, and proclaims a God.

- 110 View next the wonders of the azure main,  
 The scaly monsters, and the finny train ;  
 And all those treasures which its waves contain.  
 Then, mighty sage, explain the sov'reign cause,  
 Why thus the sea resistless ebbs and flows ;
- 115 What pow'r it is that bids it thus far go,  
 Again rebids it its proud waves withdraw.  
 Surely some God must o'er the moon preside,  
 Some pow'r Almighty must its motions guide ;  
 God awes the moon, the moon the water awes ;
- 120 The moon's the instrument, but God's the cause.

- View thine own fabric next, that wondrous frame,  
 That beauteous something, which I scarce can name !  
 In which such order, such distinction reigns,  
 Such charming harm'ny in each part remains ;
- 125 They all oppose thy doctrine, and assert  
 The amazing wonders of creating art.

If



## The TRINITY.

13

If then thou would'st this useful truth discern,  
And from the creature the creator learn ;  
Attentive on thyself employ thy thought,  
130 And let thine erring mind be by thy body taught.  
In full perfection thou'lt thy God survey ;  
The source is known, those errors fled away,  
That stamp'd divinity upon thy clay.

135 O ! cou'd the soul, from each mean passion free,  
In apt arrangement its own beauties see ;  
Itself thro' all its labyrinths pursue,  
And all its diff'rent operations view ;  
No more a slave to Epicurus' school,  
140 'Twou'd brand the monster with the name of fool ;  
Condemn his doctrines, his mean tenets hate ;  
Assert that Chance cou'd ne'er a Mind create.

Or cou'd it, caught in sacred raptures, fly  
Beyond the spacious regions of the sky,  
There,

145 There, with St. Paul, the heav'n of heav'ns survey,  
 The starry pavement, and the milky way;  
 The brilliant sceptre, and the jasper throne,  
 Th' unfading glories of the great TO ON:  
 Here fir'd with holy wonder and surprize,  
 150 For e'er 'twou'd wish to fix its ravish'd eyes;  
 For ever on th' Almighty theme to dwell,  
 And in loud anthems his just praises tell;  
 For ever, ever fix its blest abode,  
 And triumph in the presence of its God.

155 By the gay fallies of wild youth misled,  
 And in the camps of Epicurus bred,  
 Rome's boasted orator heav'n's pow'r defy'd,  
 And a wise ruler of the world deny'd:  
 But when philosophy, celestial maid!  
 160 To his astonish'd eyes her charms display'd,

Gladly

Ver. 145. *There with saint Paul the heav'n of heav'ns survey.*] See second Epist. to the *Corinthians*, Ch. xii. ver. 2, 3, 4.

Ver. 148. -----TO ON.] *Plato*, who next to his master *Socrates* had the clearest conceptions concerning the unity of the Divine nature, of any of the Philosophers, frequently styles God the *To On*, the Being which is; And 'tis observable, that whenever he speaks of the Deity, it is always in the singular number.

Ver. 156. *In the camps of Epicurus bred.*] *Tully*, as some writers of his life tell us, was at first an *Epicurean*, being educated under two famous masters of that sect, *Phadrus* and *Zeno*; but he afterwards quitted that Philosophy for one more rational.

# The TRINITY.

15

Gladly he entertain'd the beauteous guest,  
Truth's chieftain, now, did zealously attest  
A pow'r supreme ; what he before maintain'd,  
Oppos'd ; and first in reason's court he reign'd.

165 Ev'n Clarke himself, that bright, that injur'd name,  
(Albion, thy lasting glory, and thy shame.)  
Illustrious Clarke ! the wonder of our age ;  
Tho' truths divine adorn each manly page ;  
Tho' aided by great Newton's sacred skill ;  
170 With such learn'd tracts cou'd scarce his volumes fill.

Hail, great Creator ! Pow'r Supreme ador'd !  
At whose dread fiat, and almighty word,  
This wond'rous frame of things from nothing rose ;  
Thyself eternal, and without a cause.

How

Ver. 165. *Ev'n Clarke himself, that bright, that injur'd name,*  
*Albion, thy lasting glory, &c.]* Dr. Samuel Clarke was one of the greatest  
men this nation ever produced. It would be needless to explain the meaning of these and  
the following verses ; since there is hardly any one, who is the least acquainted with the  
history of the present century, who will not readily understand them.-----The present  
excellent Bishop of *Winchester*, in his Preface to Dr. Clarke's ten volumes of Sermons,  
has given so just and amiable a character of this great and good man, that it cannot be  
too much recommended, or too often read.



175 How beauteous are thy works ! how vastly fair,  
 The least, the meanest of thy creatures are !  
 How beauteous then art thou ! to whom they owe  
 Their beauties, the rich source from whence they flow.  
 Tho' deck'd in robes of pure ætherial light,  
 180 Thy essence, too superlatively bright,  
 Dazzles our eyes, and dims created sight ;  
 In these thy works thy rich perfections shine,  
 Thy boundless goodness, and thy pow'r divine.

Thee, sacred Logos, next the seraphs sing,  
 185 Eternal Son of the eternal King ;  
 They tell how thou in august pomp array'd,  
 Didst sin, and all its rebel pow'rs invade ;  
 Tell how around thy forked light'ning flew ;  
 Tell what amazement seiz'd the ghastly crew ;  
 190 How, thunder-struck, the daring monster fell,  
 Condemn'd to lasting punishment, in hell :  
 Whilst thou, triumphant, o'er the æther rode,  
 And heav'n's strong basis groan'd beneath its load,  
 And universal nature spoke a God.



## The TRINITY.

17

195 Grim Satan's self, aw'd by thy vengeful frown,  
 Confess'd a force superior to his own.

Hence the loud bruit of big-bon'd Titans rose,  
 Who impious durst the king of Heav'n oppose,  
 Heap hill on hill, and brave the Gods be foes.

200 Great Jove, indignant, bade his thunder roll,  
 And the red light'ning shot from pole to pole.  
 Amaz'd, confus'd, with more than mortal fright,  
 Hideous they shrunk to the dark realms of night.  
 There doom'd to lakes of fire, and fest'ring chains,  
 205 They rail against the Gods, and curse their endless pains.

Vain's the attempt, presumptuous the design,  
 Tho' great Jeshides' soul should breathe in mine,  
 Yet cou'd not I describe the numerous train  
 Of seraphs, which then grac'd th' ætherial plain.

210 Tell how aloof display'd their banners fly,  
 And add new lustre to the gladsome sky.  
 Uplifted by the winds, thou rod'st along,  
 Whilst round their conquering God the seraphs throng,

C

Dispos'd

Dispos'd in glorious ranks their Prince receive,  
 215 Pensive in this alone, they can't due honours give.  
 With loud acclaim the clang'ring trumpets found,  
 And Echo does from heav'ns high arch rebound.  
 And now arriv'd nigh his great Father's throne,  
 Ent'ring he took his place, and brightly shone,  
 220 Whilst in his arms the Sire embrac'd the Son.

Next thine extensive mercy they relate,  
 Thy boundless pity to man's abject state ;  
 Tell how thou deign'st his nature to assume,  
 And on thy spotless self transfer the doom  
 225 Reserv'd for him ; for him resign'st thy breath,  
 For him thou gloriest in the pangs of death ;  
 Regardless of thine own superior state,  
 Tho' million angels thy behests did wait ;  
 Tho' next in splendor to the pow'r supreme,  
 230 From whose illumin'd face incessant beauties beam.

Hail, Son of God ! Saviour of men ! thy praise  
 Shall claim the copious matter of my lays ;

## The TRINITY.

19

Thee never, never, shall this harp of mine  
Forget, nor from thy Father's praise disjoin.  
235 Thy boundless mercy always I'll adore,  
And ever in loud songs extoll thy pow'r.

Delightful task! how glorious 'tis to sing  
Thee, blest MESSIAH, prophet, priest, and king,  
Author of bliss, fountain of endless joy ;  
240 Our grateful theme on earth, in heav'n our blest employ.

With equal ardour, nor less tuneful lays,  
Thee, sacred PARACLETE! the seraphs praise.  
Tell how from every quarter of the sky,  
Fierce rushing winds with bellowing fury fly,  
245 Whilst thou thy fav'rite servants deign'st t'attend,  
And in emblaz'nous robes of fire descend.  
A sudden light'ning shook the trembling dome ;  
A dreadful murmur fill'd th' assembled room.  
Huge cloven tongues, incumbent on the air,  
250 Reveal thy mission and thy power declare ;  
Th' inspir'd teachers thy blest impulse feel,  
Of their exalted trust the promis'd seal ;

## The TRINITY.

And as, man's haughty promise to chastise,  
 Justice incens'd did various tongues devise ;  
 255 From various tongues, blest change ! we Gentiles date  
 The radiant dawning of the gospel state.

They tell, from thee what numerous blessings flow,  
 Man's great support and comfort here below.  
 Conceiv'd by thee, the Lord of heav'n and earth,  
 260 From a pure spotless maid deriv'd his birth.  
 Nigh Jordan's stream with mystic wings out-spread,  
 Dove-like thou hover'st o'er Messiah's head,  
 Whilst thus a voice descends from heav'n's high throne,  
 " This is my son---my best-belov'd---my son  
 265 " In whom my soul delights ; his laws obey,"  
 And a glad homage to your Sov'reign pay.

When in paternal majesty array'd,  
 Th' Almighty Word all things of nothing made,

Atten-

*Ver. 255. From various tongues, blest change [---] The learned Mr. Pyle in his Notes upon Acts, Ch. ii. Ver. 4. observes, that as the division and variety of languages was once made a punishment, and wrought confusion among mankind, now, by a wise turn of events, the same variety was made a means of collecting and uniting them into one religion and society.*



## The TRINITY.

21

Attendant, thou in pow'r unbounded shone,  
270 And heav'n and earth thy vital influence own.

      Illum'd by thee, of old the Prophets taught  
The chosen seed, and mighty wonders wrought;  
The Apostles too, with thy blest gifts endow'd,  
The certain means of man's salvation show'd;  
275 By signs and miracles their mission seal'd,  
And the hid things of future times reveal'd;  
The heathen world to pure religion charm'd,  
And Sin and Satan of their sting disarm'd.  
Lowly and meek they in the church preside,  
280 Nor strove to rule, their business was to guide;  
For worth like this, thee, HERRING, we revere  
'The able prelate, and the guide sincere.  
Such virtues, gen'rous HOADLEY, grace thy mind,  
Thou bravest, humblest, greatest of mankind.

285 No church-man then at sov'reign greatness aim'd;  
Nor Laudean zeal pure gospel truths defam'd.

Ver. 286. *Nor Laudean zeal*-----] *Laud*, Archbishop of *Canterbury* in the reign of *K. Charles I.* was a learned man, but very indiscreet. His character is very well drawn by  
Bishop

## The TRINITY.

No Kirk-consistory did then give law,  
 Nor Rome's proud priest the Christian world o'erawe.  
 Religion ne'er on persecution grew;  
 290 Force may the man, it can't the soul subdue.

Grant, heav'n, that I may hail the happy day!  
 When truth triumphant shall its beams display;  
 When honesty shall suffer no restraint!  
 'Tis probity, not faith, that makes the saint.

295 O! whilst misguided by prophetic dreams,  
 Extatic raptures, visionary whims;

Or

Bishop *Burnet*, in the history of his own times, vol. i. p. 49. "He was, says the Bishop, a learned, sincere, and zealous man, regular in life, humble in his private deportment; but was a hot indiscreet man, eagerly pursuing some matters that were either inconsiderable or mischievous; such as setting the communion-table by the east walls of the churches, bowing to it, and calling it the Altar; the suppressing the *Walloon* privileges, the breaking off lectures, the encouraging of sports on the Lord's day, with some other, things that were of no value; and yet all the zeal and heat of that time was laid out on those." The Bishop next proceeds to mention several instances of his behaviour in the Star-Chamber and High-Commission-Court, which he says were such blemishes, that nothing but the putting him to death in so unjust a manner could have raised his character; which, as he says, it did to a degree of setting him up as a pattern, and established all his notions as standards, by which judgments are to be made of men, whether they are true to the church or not. By his diary he appears to have been an abject fawner on the duke of *Buckingham*, and a superstitious regarder of dreams. His defence of himself, writ with so much care when he was in the Tower, is a very mean performance.

Ver. 294. 'Tis probity, not faith, that makes the saint.] 'Tis not here intended to depreciate faith, as appears by the following lines. All that the author means is, that a bare belief of the *Credenda* of religion cannot recommend to the favour of God. The Devils believe and tremble. Whereas an honest sincere endeavour after truth, tho' not always attended with success, tho' it will rarely miss, especially in matters of importance, will be attended with peace of mind here, and eternal happiness hereafter.

## The TRINITY.

23

Or mop'd by gloomy horror, or despair,  
Slaves to blind rage, or superstitious fear;  
Or in pretended sanctity array'd,  
300 Like some base metal, with pure gold o'erlaid;  
Unhallow'd devotees thy influence claim,  
And gild oppression with Religion's name;  
Soft be my manners, gentle, easy, free,  
When most benevolent, then most like thee.

305 How blest these times, had they their bliss perceiv'd,  
And what those heav'n-sent teachers taught, believ'd!  
Many, 'tis true, a wise attention lend,  
And well-weigh'd reason in firm faith does end.  
But deaf to reason, and her sacred lore,  
310 Some by wild zeal misled, by interest more;  
Their faith to stagger, various arts employ.  
In vain those arts, they can't their faith destroy,  
Undaunted, all temptation they defy,  
Safe on thy aid, blest Spirit, they rely;  
315 For him, who bled for them, triumphant die.

Thy sure effects, divine ætherial Dove,  
Are goodness, peace, long-suffering, meekness, love.



## The TRINITY.

Christ's vice-roy, thou, over the earth shalt reign,  
Till HE our great Redeemer come again.

320 To the sincere all useful truth's impart;  
Release from sin, and sanctify the heart.

Hail, great conductor of the chosen race!  
Spirit of truth, giver of every grace,  
Of divine Poesy the sov'reign spring,  
325 Aided by thee, of heav'nly things we sing.  
O! wou'd some spark of thy celestial fire  
Sublime my genius, and my breast inspire,  
On hallow'd wings th' enraptur'd muse shou'd fly,  
And speak a language worthy of the sky.  
330 Thee wou'd I sing, sole self-existing MIND,  
Thee, blest MESSIAH, favour of mankind;  
'Thee, sacred PARACLETE, the muse shou'd praise,  
And list'ning Angels shou'd approve my lays.

F I N I S.